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NEWSLETTER

102-1357

9 April 1992

Washington, DC

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS -- WHAT IT IS - There has been much discussion of late regarding the federal funding of the arts. More specifically, the role and importance of the National Endowment for the Arts has come into question.

The major goals of the NEA are to foster artistic excellence by helping develop America's finest creative talent; preserve our cultural heritage in all its diversity; make the arts available to wider, more informed audiences; and promote the overall financial stability of American arts organizations. Grant applications are not judged by the NEA alone, but rather by panels of artists, arts administrators, scholars, lay persons, and others knowledgeable in the arts. These panels must meet the congressional requirement of the wide geographic, ethnic, and minority sectors reflective of our society.

Since its inception in 1965, the Arts Endowment has been a critical force in promoting the cultural welfare of the general citizenry and investing in our nation's resources. During its existence, the endowment has made 90,000 grants. Of these, about 30 have been questionable. As a result, Congress enacted a "Decency Standard" designed to ensure that artistic excellence and merit are the criteria by which applications are judged, taking into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public.

Art is subjective -- what may be beauty to one may not be to another and that's why basic fundamental guidelines are necessary. For this reason, I supported the decency language but unequivocally oppose the funding of child pornography, obscenity, works that attack religion, or works which desecrate the flag of the United States.

On several occasions, an artist's final product has turned out to be quite different from how it was presented. Obviously the NEA is unable to follow each grant recipient from beginning to end every step of the way. But when there is clear and substantiated evidence that the product does not comply with (1) the purposes for which the grant was awarded

(more)

as specified in the program guidelines; (2) the representations in the application; and (3) the terms and conditions applicable to the grant, the NEA may terminate the grant and begin efforts to recoup the misspent money.

Overall, the NEA has proven that a relatively small investment of federal funds has yielded a substantial financial return and made a significant contribution to the quality of American life. In fact, NEA funding comprises .012 or 1/100th of one percent of the Fiscal '92 Federal government appropriations. This works out to 68-cents in taxes per citizen per year.

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PUBLIC SERVICE SCHOLARSHIPS - In an attempt to recruit the best and brightest into government, the Public Employees Roundtable (PER) has begun accepting applications for their 1992 Public Service Scholarships. The PER is a non-profit coalition of professional and managerial organizations as well as federal, state and local government agencies designed to encourage interest in public service, develop excellence in government and inform Americans of the quality of people in government.

Applicants must be enrolled either full-time in a four-year undergraduate degree program or be enrolled full- or part-time in a graduate or post-graduate program. All applicants must have a minimum cumulative grade point average in their current degree program of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

Applications are available by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to PER Scholarship Program, P O Box 14270, Washington, DC 20044-4270. For more information you may call the Public Employees Roundtable at (202) 927-5000. Applications must be submitted no later than May 22, 1992 and scholarships will be awarded on July 30, 1992.

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VISITORS FROM HOME - Mr Victor C Huff of Mathis; Mr Bob Chandler of McAllen; Mr Lonnie Stewart of George West; Russell and Margie Boening of Floresville; William T and Annie Grimmer, and Larry Krupala of Cuero; and Mr Roberto Hector Pena of Harlingen.

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